

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, January 11. 1709.

I Should leave the Dispute of *Presbyterian* Baptism, and the Practice of the Church of *Scotland* to its own Orthodox Foundation, which will stand, when the Noise and Clamour of these raving Enemies will be swallow'd up in Time and Truth.

But I cannot pass his last Papers without some few Observations.

First, He cries out, That the Government is moved to fall upon him, which he pretends to call giving up the Cause; what the Person he charges this with may do, I have nothing to say to, but he cannot expect to have this Cause given up to him; that Infants are Damn'd who are not Baptiz'd, because they are not Baptiz'd —

All he says beyond this, is, according to his Custom, wandring from his Point.

He will have Baptism to be a Regenerating Ordinance, and without Regeneration no Salvation. I ask'd him a fair Question, viz. *Who dare say, that the Soul of an Infant dying without Baptism, is lost by that meer Omission?* — His Answer is, *But the Soul of the Parent may, if that Omission be wilful;* I allow that, for every wilful Sin, whether of Omission or Commission, is Damning in its Nature — But let any Man Judge, what an Answer that is to my Question — From hence I ought to say, he grants my Position — That the Child may be sav'd without Baptism — And if so, *Baptism will not bear all the Weight*

Weight be puts upon it——For tho' Baptism is a very Sacred Ordinance, yet it must be granted, that more Weight may be plac'd upon it, than GOD himself intended.

He cannot forbear to mix Falsties with his Arguings, viz. N^o 23. *A Presbyterian thinks himself safe if he sees his Child die in his own House unbaptiz'd, and their Preachers teach them so, and the Review defends it; now this is false in Fact*——If the Omission is willful; a Presbyterian thinks it is more safe than he does, because every known Duty omitted is a Sin; but the Presbyterian does not think, that the Child shall be lost for his Omission, or he be unsafe, if that Omission was not willful; nor does this differ from the very Doctrine or Profession of the Church of England——Tho' this Man would run her up to his Extrems; for Example, Suppose a Man in Communion with the Church of England, has a Child born in a Country-Village remote from the Minister——The Child is weak, he sends for the Minister to Baptize it, fearing the Infant should die; the Minister is out of Town, or Sick, or cannot be found; the poor Man believing it his Duty to have his Child Baptiz'd, sends away to the next Parish, and is disappointed there, and so on; in the mean time the Child dies——Will any Man have the Face to say, that either this Man or his Infant shall perish for this Omission? *I think the Case very plain; if this Man will bind heavier Burthens on the People than they can bear, we know no Authority for it in Scripture, let him show it us.*

But he is gone from this, as indeed he well may, and having Unchurched the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Un-Evangeliz'd all their Ministers; he has now taken away the Vertue of their Baptism; and will have it, *That it is better to be Baptiz'd by a Porter, than by the Moderator of the General Assembly*——Now were it worth while to talk to him, he cannot make out That neither; for by his own Supposition, as the Porter and the Moderator are both Laymen, BAPTISM by one, must be as good as t'other; the Porter cannot be better than the

Moderator, unless it be, that generally speaking, his Morals are worse.

But the End of this Blunder will appear in his next Paper; and he comes to it very gradually; first he establishes the Salvation of the Infant upon Baptism; then he establishes the Vertue of Baptism upon the right Administration; and the right Administration upon the Qualification of the Person administering——And all this is to bring down the Right of Baptism to be only in Ministers Episcopally ordain'd.

1. He establishes the Salvation of the Infant positively upon Baptism, N^o 24. "Baptism is a Seal which confirms the Covenant to us, and without which we have no Title to the Covenant——Now this is false in Fact; for the Covenant is to Believers, and to their Seed, no where limited to their baptized Seed; and so, as before, in his Metaphor taken from Conveyances and Deeds of an Estate, I say, the Right to an Estate consists not in the Deeds, which are but Proofs of the Right, made to avoid Dispute, and therefore formerly call'd Evidences, but the Right lies in the Gift of Ancestors, or Payment of an agreed Purchase——If these can be made out, tho' there were no Writings, the Heir inherits and possesses; tho' the Law requires Proof by Instrument, yet the Law will not Out a Man of a just Right for Want of such Evidences——On the other hand, if Writings of an Estate, mentioning the Purchase, say acknowledging it paid, are duly executed and delivered; yet if it can be fairly prov'd, the Consideration was not paid, or that it was not a valuable Consideration, the Person claiming merely by those Deeds, shall not possess——So that the Writings are not the Essential Part of the Heirs Right at all, no more is Baptism such an Essential to the Covenant, that none can plead the Covenant without it——And the like Absurdity seems to me to lie in his applying that Text, Gen. xvii. 14. *The Uncircumcis'd Man-Child shall be cut off from his*

People. If he means, this to be Temporal Death, he cannot suppose it to be while he was a Child, but when being grown adult, he had continued in the wilful Omission——And the next Words explain it, *he hath broken my Covenant*. The Infant of eight Days old could not be said to have broken God's Covenant——And this is confirm'd in the Case of Moses, *G O D sought to slay Moses*, says the Text, *Exod. 4. 24*. The Case is his Omission of Circumcision——But if the former Command had meant the Infant, GOD would not have punish'd Moses but the Children; if then this Text means the Man that had Uncircumcised, as 'tis plain it does, then 'tis nothing to the Purpose at all.

2. But we are now brought up to a higher Excels—*Rehearsal, N° 24*. "None can plead the Covenant who are not admitted to it, in that Manner and Form which GOD hath prescrib'd—*This is very terrible*, and Men ought to be very well satisfy'd, what is or is not the Manner and Form that GOD has appointed——And if this were true, the least Omission of Form in the Administration would deprive the poor Infant of *Salvation*——These are horrid Extravagancies; but we shall see where they all tend.

3. This is explain'd to mean the Right of the Person administering, which he affirms, with a large Stock in the Face, are the Bishops, and none else; we shall see how he will prove it hereafter——*Rehearsal, N° 24. Col. 3.*

"*They (the Presbyterian Ministers) are none of the Successors of those to whom the Commission was given, GO AND BAPTIZE, but on the contrary, are risen*

up in Rebellion against their lawful Bishops, who are the SUCCESSORS of the Apostles; and therefore N° 25. he says, he will not call being baptiz'd by an Episcopal Clergyman, Re-baptizing, because, says he, *I judge the former to be no Baptism at all, as being done without any Consent of the Bishop*. Thus he has brought two very fair Points upon the Stage.

No Salvation without Baptism.
No Baptism without an Episcopal Minister.

Will any Man blame the *Romish Church*, for exercising the compleat Tyranny of Priestcraft over the World, who had brought the World to believe, the Power of forgiving Sins to be lodg'd in the Absolution of the Priest?——And if a Rich Man has a Child to be sav'd, *I should say Baptiz'd*, and the Clergy agree not to Baptize him under Five Hundred Pounds, who can blame them? The Man is able to pay it, and to be sure will pay it, rather than his Child shall be Eternally lost.

As to GOD's Uncovenanted Mercies, which the *Rehearsal* speaks of——I shall take no farther Notice of them yet, than this: That I would desire him to explain, what he means by them——I will not Treat him as he does me, suggest a Meaning for him.

We are now come to the main Point; The Exclusive Right of Episcopally Ordained Ministers, to the Administration of Gospel-Ordinances, wherein he has made the Clergy, all, a parcel of Ecclesiastick Attornies——We shall in our next, offer some few Objections to the Diploma of their EXCLUSIVE Authority.